



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing –March 8, 2013  
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Daniel C. Esty  
Presented by Deputy Commissioner Macky McCleary

**Raised Senate Bill No. 976 - AN ACT CONCERNING BUS IDLING**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill No. 976 – An Act Concerning Bus Idling. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offers the following testimony.

DEEP opposes this bill. The exceptions raised in this bill are unnecessary given the exceptions that now exist in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). DEEP acknowledges that limitations on idling school buses should be implemented in a manner that is safe for drivers and children. However, both the existing CGS and DEEP's section 22a-174-18 of the Regulations of State Agencies provide adequate protection for the health and safety of children on school buses.

DEEP recognizes the need to transport school children in both safety and comfort. Equally important is the protection of children's health. DEEP strongly supports protecting school children from unnecessary exposure to idling school buses. Idling school buses emit fine particulates, which are associated with heart and respiratory conditions including asthma and bronchitis. Diesel exhaust also contains a number of toxic air pollutants, as well as black carbon, or soot, which can be harmful to the students riding these buses. School children are more susceptible than adults to the health effects of diesel exhaust because they breathe more rapidly and their respiratory systems are still developing.

This bill would add two exceptions to allow idling for the purposes of performing safety inspections of school buses prior to operation of such vehicles and when the temperature is below thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. These exceptions are unnecessary given the current exemptions in the existing CGS. Subdivisions (2) and (4) of section 14-277(b) of the CGS allow for idling, "when it is necessary to operate heating, cooling or auxiliary equipment installed on the school bus when such equipment is necessary to accomplish the intended use of the school bus, including, but not limited to, the operation of safety equipment" and "when it is necessary to maintain a safe temperature for students with special needs." DEEP believes these current exceptions adequately balance the need to keep school children safe and

warm while also minimizing unnecessary exposure to diesel exhaust. Expanding the provisions that allow for unnecessary idling not only poses a risk to public health, but also wastes fuel and money.

Adding new exceptions to the idling restrictions in section 14-277 of the CGS is unnecessary given the protections set forth in both subdivision (2) and (4) of subsection (b) of section 14-277 of the CGS, this amendment may cause confusion among the regulated community and could therefore possibly lead to unnecessary school bus idling. In summary, DEEP opposes this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact DEEP's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at 860-424-3401 or [Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov](mailto:Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov).